

QUONOCHONTAUG HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Oral History

ARTHUR (Art) RICHARD GANZ

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Interviewed by Anne S. Doyle

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DOYLE: I am sitting with Art Ganz, of 281 East Beach Road, and he is going to relate his memories of Quonnie and also his family history. So Art, we can start with your just saying your full name.

GANZ: OK. My name is Arthur Richard Ganz. I was born in Providence, Rhode Island on July 1, 1947.

DOYLE: OK. I think we can start with having you tell me what part of your family came here first and where they came from, that kind of thing.

GANZ: All right. My family connection comes from my mother's side of the family. My grandfather, Alexander Courtney Somerville, was the first one, really, to come to this area. He was a good friend of George Sarcey. And George and Agnes Sarcey built many small cottages, down, I guess in the '20s and '30s, in this area. My grandfather was unemployed after the Depression and had worked with Mr. Sarcey, who they had known through their Scottish heritage for a good number of years.

During that process, my great uncle, Frederick Patterson, and my aunt Edith, Edith Patterson—they were part of the family – my grandparents were Al and Bertha Somerville. And my grandmother and Edith Patterson were sisters. They were orphaned. My grandmother pretty much raised my aunt Edith.

My grandparents had one daughter, my mother, Edith Ganz; and Edith and Fred Patterson had no children. So when my grandfather was working with Mr. Sarcey, he recognized the value and the potential of living in Quonochontaug and knowing about the property. So my uncle Fred, who had no children and a very good job in the jewelry industry, which was one of the leading industries at the time, essentially bought two parcels of property on East Beach Road. The first property, which my house sits on, as

well as the Patterson –Somerville house, which is at 321 East Beach Road, was purchased on what is called the “Little Sammy” lot. And the back lot,

1

Ganz

which was later purchased from H. T. Thorp, was known as the “West Sammy” lot. Essentially, there was a paper road separating the two sides, which was called Hoxie Road, which was never built on, but it exists on paper. So the original plan – and of course World War Two kind of came, and meat and so forth was ration[ed].

My grandfather, who lived in Cranston, Rhode Island, had raised turkeys and chickens in his yard in what we now know as suburban Cranston and decided to expand this turkey operation down in the property in Quonochontaug. So my grandfather built the cottage that now sits –it’s owned by the Brigham family now – and that was originally going to be a store and a place to live. And in back of my house, in the wooded area, is the remains of an old turkey coop that was a tar-paper shack; and the old turkey runs and so forth [were] out there, as well as another well. And the turkey business started off but failed miserably because apparently there was a disease that affected domestic turkeys. So from then on, the cottage became a summer residence for Edith and Fred Patterson, and my grandparents played a very active part in that.

DOYLE: Now, exactly where was the cottage?

GANZ: The cottage is directly to the south of us; it’s 321 East Beach Road. It’s now owned by the Brighams.

DOYLE: Oh, I didn’t know that.

GANZ: Originally there was eight and a half acres on the parcel.

DOYLE: Mmm-hmm

GANZ: After the turkey thing, the property was rented. It was always an agricultural piece. And it was rented to Vernon Hutchins, who ran the East West Farms for as far back as I can remember. Now I remember back – probably one of my earliest memories was just prior to the 1954 hurricane. I mean I came here as a child. My mother and I would come and visit Aunt Edith and Uncle Fred on a regular basis, and did all the summertime things—drive down from – I grew up in Warwick, Rhode Island. And we would drive down and stop at the East West Farms and pick up the milk and the eggs and vegetables and whatever was around and we’d spend time there. And through my younger years, I spent summer times here, a week at a time, long weekends, what have you, visiting with Aunt Edith and Uncle Fred. And over a period of time, I grew and things went on.

Now that particular house –and it’s interesting that Barbara Brigham is such a gardener (that owns it now). But that house had several big vegetable gardens in it. And they always had tons of vegetables growing, and uh – Also in the back, and it’s all gone today, but literally from in back, behind where the turkey coop was, directly behind my house, all the way down to the Sweenys’ house, there was a path cut, and we would go get blueberries, just by the bucket-load. And so things like that were –

DOYLE: Now the turkey coop was built by your grandfather?

GANZ: By my grandfather. Yep; he built the coop there.

DOYLE: Oh I see.

GANZ: But for many years one of the things you’d do was get blueberries there. And the blackberries: walking down to the beach, all along the sides of the road, you would pick blackberries. And so it was a great time as a kid growing up down here. Ironically, neither my grandparents nor my Aunt Edith and Uncle Fred knew how to swim! And they would come down here, as they would refer to it, as “We’re goin’ down to the country.” But I don’t ever recall my grandfather going in – I don’t ever recall my grandfather even being down at the beach! Uh, my grandmother and of course, my mother and I would go, and my Aunt Edith, but my mother was a swimmer. And my mother told me too –most of this information, of course, comes from my mother-- she came down in the late ‘20’s, with a family by the name of Pomeroy from Cranston. No relation, I don’t believe, to the Central Beach Pomeroy. But that was her earliest visit; and she described, you know, how the beach was back in the ‘20’s; that was—I mean that was an all-day safari, to come down.

DOYLE: Yeah; yeah.

GANZ: So that was pretty much how the childhood thing went. **DOYLE:** Did you go to the pond a lot when you were little?

GANZ: Well, this is what I’m leading up to. I always had a job. And I had a newspaper route up in Warwick. And I saved my money, and one of the things that I bought – we always had sailboats. But they were up in Narragansett Bay.

DOYLE: “We” meaning –

GANZ: My parents; my parents and I. And when we joined the East Greenwich Yacht Club, they had a launch service. So the little eight-foot pram we used to row out to the mooring was no longer in service. So I saved up my newspaper money and got a 2-horsepower Elgin outboard motor, which of course was built by Sears & Roebuck.

DOYLE: [Laughing—]

GANZ: And I had – old Mr. Davis, who lived over on Burdick Street, gave me permission to leave the dinghy on the dock. There was a dock over on the Burdick right-of-way. And so I would go down every morning, with my grandfather’s wheelbarrow – one of those old iron wheeled wheelbarrows – with my outboard motor and my life jackets and my can of gasoline and a snack and the dog – and thus began my venture into the salt ponds.

DOYLE: Now how old were you then?

GANZ: Ten. I mean I’ve been on boats since I was -- as long as I’ve floated, I was on boats. But I could only go as far as Dr. Sayer’s house. And Dr. Sayer’s house was just –it burned, oh I don’t know, maybe in the ‘80’s. But it was on what is now known as Governor’s Island, on the pond. And if you looked out, you could see the house. So they would know where the boat was.

DOYLE: Was it really an island? Or was it an extension --?

GANZ: Kind of a peninsula, like Nope’s Island; I don’t ever remember it –

DOYLE: So how did he get—

GANZ: It’s all across the beach. Of course, Dr. Sayer owned a lot of property. In fact, I *think* that he owned that whole barrier beach down to there. And there was a nice house there. But the only way to do it was to drive down the beach. Obviously --its demise was a fire, and of course the firemen couldn’t get down there to save it. That happened on the opening day of scallop season. That’s another story. But uh – so I could ride around on my boat in the pond. And of course over at Tommy Saunders’ marina, they used to have Charlestown Chew and frozen Snickers bars in the freezer.

DOYLE: Now where was Tommy Saunders’ marina?

GANZ: Tommy Saunders’ marina was a little red marina; it’s now called Lavin’s Landing. I don’t know – Tom was just a sweet old guy that was there actually as a little kid, knowing Tom. But as I grew up and got into marine science, Tom was one of my mentors; because there was nobody that knew the ponds any better than Tom Saunders. And so ---

DOYLE: Did you go out in the pond with him?

GANZ: Not till later on. He was just a nice man, at the marina. His wife was always grouchy, but he was always very nice. And you know, it was just good times.

DOYLE: Did you fish?

GANZ: I was a boater; I just liked to go explore, and find new places. And swim; I had a face mask and a pair of fins and a little small spear gun. And I would pretend I was Mike Nelson—in three feet of water –[laughing] nothin’ much to it.

DOYLE: Were you allowed to do this by yourself?

GANZ: Yeah; times were so different. You know, even as I got into my teenage years—I don't know; it just seemed like if you were out in a boat, you were in a kind of safer environment. You know you're not worried about traffic or getting hit by a car or something like that.

DOYLE: Did you have a life jacket?

GANZ: I was always a good swimmer; yes you always —the rule of any boat is you have to have a life jacket. But I was always a very good swimmer. My father was a champion swimmer. And I was swimming early on. And whenever we would get together in the water, we would pick a point and swim to it. I mean, if Dad was down, we would swim from the rock way, way down almost to the Blue Shutters and back.

DOYLE: You were strong swimmers.

GANZ: Yes I was a lifeguard and all that, when I got older. But that was just kind of a given. So I would come here and enjoyed Quonnie. But as I got a little older, I got more and more involved in sailing and racing sailboats. And so my teenage years, I would come here usually Thursday nights to mow the grass for my grandmother, but I didn't spend a lot of time in Quonnie until I went to graduate school.

DOYLE: Now your grandparents' place: was right where – I mean was it right here?

GANZ: Brighams' house. Right next door.

DOYLE: It was? Oh, I'm sorry! See I don't even know where the Brighams are. I'll have to look at it.

GANZ: The little white cottage immediately to the south of us [south of Art's house on East Beach Road, where this interview took place].

DOYLE: Oh, that was where they –

GANZ: Right. So, now, Uncle Fred died of a heart attack; so Aunt Edith was widowed. And my grandparents spent – and would go down, after my grandfather retired from his job, they would pretty much—the three of them would kind of spend the summer down here. My grandfather was always extremely handy and was always building and fixing and was always very, very handy there.
And of course my grandfather was in the band business – one of my favorite Quonnie stories. My grandfather was in the band business. And he played drums, and he played drums for the big-band era dance bands. And of course he was Scottish –In fact, I think that the original connection with the Sarceys was [that] they used to do minstrel shows, in Providence. And

Agnes Sarcey had something to do with those minstrel shows, back in the '20's. And so Grandpa had the various bands, but his crowning thing was [that] he and a couple of others formed the Rhode Island Highlanders' Pipe Band. Which is still in business. And in fact I met a guy that joined our church about three weeks ago that actually played with my grandfather in the Rhode Island Highlanders! But Rhode Island Highlanders – all those Scotsmen—of course they loved their “tea”; and Grandpa and Grandma would have a band picnic down in Quonochontaug. Well, you guessed it: the Scotsmen would have just enough under their belts-- they would pick up their pipes and their drums and they would march between the corn stalks planted in the field.

[Laughing] And it was – I've got some pictures; I'm going to find some pictures for you – I don't have any pictures of them specifically marching through the cornfield, but there was many good times –

DOYLE: [Under her breath] Oh my gosh! Now the corn stalks : were they—

GANZ: This was all silage corn for East West Farm, so –

DOYLE: For East West Farms? That's what I'm saying.

GANZ: Yeah; yup.

DOYLE: Yeah; I'm getting it.

GANZ: And so there was always band parties, and my parents would have parties down there. In fact, back in the day, they actually had clambakes on the beach. They would dig a hole in the beach and would do a real live clambake right there on the beach.

DOYLE: Um hm. But at this point, they were still there just in the summers, not – they didn't live there year-round.

GANZ: No. Nobody ever lived in that house year round. So Grandpa and Grandma inherited the house after Aunt Edith died in 1958. So they inherited the house and continued to live there and maintain it and enjoy it. And I went off to prep school. And very sadly, my grandfather died very, very tragically.

DOYLE: Oh, oh –

GANZ: He – They were very active in all sorts of fraternal organizations and band things; they were out all the time. And when I was home from Thanksgiving vacation in 1965, uh we had had Thanksgiving together, and the Saturday night after that, my grandparents went out; this was from their house in Cranston. The house was broken into, the dog was shot, and my grandfather dropped dead of a heart attack.

And so my grandmother never went back to that house. And she moved in to live with my parents. So she lived with my parents in Warwick and would

come down and spend her summers in Quonnie. So she would be down here. And she never drove a car, but she had some good friends: Lucille Scanlon, who was Munroe Hoxie's sister drove my grandmother, and of course they were avid Grangers. And then also Helen Ross. Both of them lived up on Route One. They would take my grandmother to every grange function and everything else, up until she went into a nursing home.

So my grandmother was in the house there, and we would go down and visit. And various family people would come down and visit. And when my grandmother turned maybe 90, 91, she fell and she had to go into nursing home. So for a period of time, we rented the cottage, and then after my grandmother died—my father died before my grandmother—and so my mother decided that she wanted to sell it. So it was one-acre zoning in those days, so we cut an acre lot and sold it to the Brighams. And the Brighams –

DOYLE: Oh, I see. When was that generally? You don't have to be specific –

GANZ: Probably around 19 --early 80's.

DOYLE: Um hm.

GANZ: Could be. And so the Brighams lived there, and then they completely gutted and re-vamped the house. But I suspect within the next year or two that house will be demolished and they're going to put in a big fancy retirement house there.

DOYLE: So they're going to be here year-round.

GANZ: Yeah. So that's pretty much about the house. And then the property I kept for my kids. Of course, in 1974 – am I kind of back tracking here?

DOYLE: No that's all right; you do what you want –

GANZ: Well, I myself was in prep school and then college.

DOYLE: Where did you go to prep school?

GANZ: I went to Bridgeton Academy, in North Bridgeton, Maine. And then I went to Nason College and graduated in 1970 and started working for the then Department of Natural Resources as a summer employee. And the folks at the Department of Natural Resources liked me and suggested that I go to URI for graduate school. I was planning on going to graduate school down in Virginia. And so from that summer job evolved into going to the University of Rhode Island, where I went from 1970 to 1973 and got a Master's of Science degree in Marine Biology. And while I was there, at URI, I occupied the cottage. So there was my connection back to Quonochontaug and how much I really loved it here.

And so I lived here essentially from when my grandmother moved out –well, school started, I moved in, she moved out, and I stayed there until probably

this time of year when it – you know --well, the house had no foundation, so when you start to worry about pipes freezing, it was time to move back. So I'd bunk in with my parents in the wintertime, and as soon as it was warm enough to head back to the beach, I lived at the cottage.

And then my grandmother would come down, and I'd go to whatever employment I happened to have. So that was the schedule. But as I guess luck would have it—here it is close to 40 years later--I went to URI and got my master's degree, and the guy who mentored me at the Department of Natural Resources had a serious liver ailment and died at age 35. Everybody moved up a slot. So when I finished my master's, they hired me to fill that slot. And – 35 years later I retired!

DOYLE: [Laughing]

GANZ: So I went from working at the Department of Natural Resources –

DOYLE: What was your job there?

GANZ: I was a marine biologist. I was always a marine biologist.

DOYLE: Yup; specifically, what does that mean?

GANZ: Well, we were the Department of Environmental Management—it became the Department of Environmental Management shortly thereafter, and we were head of – we were operating the Marine Fisheries section. So we were dealing with fisheries, fish stocks, culturing of animals, shellfish management; since it was a small staff with a lot of responsibilities, we were really Jack of All Trades. When a particular development was going on along the shoreline, somebody – usually me—would have to evaluate the environmental impact of this. And of course that started off as a four-man staff, in 1973; and it grew, exponentially, since that time. So I was—
DOYLE: And your territory was just—the boundaries of Rhode Island.

GANZ: Whole state of Rhode Island, whole state of Rhode Island. At that point in history, there were four marine biologists to cover the entire state.

DOYLE: Fresh and salt --?

GANZ: No; just salt. There were four freshwater biologists, to deal with the lakes, and they worked at the Great Swamp. And there was another four biologists that worked with wildlife – deer and birds and that kind of stuff. So that was the DEM Division of Fish and Wildlife. So my work was primarily with fisheries and marine environmental protection. And as I said, it was the kind of a thing – because we had such a small staff –that you really didn't specialize in a particular thing. I mean, if a crisis came up, for example when I started working, we had grant money, to do the offshore red crab fishery. And that was when the fish stocks had started to show some decline, and what we were trying to do was introduce new species into the marketplace, to

take the fishing pressure off lobsters and cod and things like that. So during that era I was doing a red-crab study, to try to encourage fishermen to go fish for red crabs and less lobsters. Similar projects –

DOYLE: Are red crabs edible?–

GANZ: Oh, red crabs –

DOYLE: I don't know anything about red crabs.

GANZ: They're a deep-water --they're caught at the Continental Shelf, and they look very much like a tanner crab in the Alaskan – they're not as big as a King Crab, but they have a shell about this size [demonstrating] and legs out to about here. So it was all red meat. So we went – you know that was a study that we did. [Also] Introduction of squid: now everybody's eating calamari today.

DOYLE: Mm hm.

GANZ: Out of that project was a squid component. And we introduced squid into the marketplace because it was bait before that. Also skates, goosfish—which are now called monkfish, very valued—those were all junk species that nobody bothered with but that program. So I started doing that kind of work. And then, when the menhaden business came up, you know I had to do --I was doing this menhaden study. But in the back of my heart and soul, I always felt that our State --of course we always had to go where the grant money was—they still do. But I felt we had more of a responsibility to the State and our coastal waters. And somehow that evolved --well, I guess it evolved because we were trying to raise bay scallops. And the earliest project that we had –

DOYLE: Can I ask you a question?

GANZ: Yeah.

DOYLE: You were trying to raise bay scallops --?

GANZ: To get them into –

DOYLE: In a farm? Like an aquaculture—

GANZ: To get them into the ponds. It evolved into that.

DOYLE: But they weren't naturally there.

GANZ: They were. Scallops are (this is getting way away from Quonnie! Rein me in!) Bay scallops have a two-year life cycle. They're spawned, they're set—

DOYLE: Those are the big scallops –

GANZ: The bay scallops –

DOYLE: The big ones—

GANZ; No; the little ones.

DOYLE: The little ones; OK.

GANZ: They look like a Shell Gasoline sign. So if -- And they were very plentiful in the coastal salt ponds and in certain areas of Narragansett Bay. And they pretty much vanished. And there was a curiosity out there as to-- and of course the intense popularity of scallops—[how to] raise that [population]. So the first year I started working, we were able to get some scallops from Cape Cod – juveniles, baby scallops –and we planted them into several places in Rhode Island, specifically in Point Judith Pond and up in Narrow River. And we had a pretty good success rate with it. But we couldn't continue to get scallops from them, so what evolved –[through] John Carlson, who's a great friend and colleague –brilliant man, absolutely brilliant man—decided that we needed to raise scallops in a hatchery. So John, primarily, and I helped John: we set up a bay-scallop hatchery, first in Jamestown and then later on at the lab in Jerusalem. We actually forced the scallops to spawn, and then fed them; grew algae – most of it was growing algae—

DOYLE: So all within a caged situation?

GANZ: Essentially, what are tanks. Fish tanks. And when they got to a certain size, we let them loose, in the salt ponds. And we never could get it – John was very successful; John has published—in fact, there's actually a scallop disease with John's name on it, that he discovered in the research. But we didn't succeed greatly with the scallop hatchery. At the same time that this was going on –

DOYLE: Do you know why?

GANZ: No; we still don't know. Well, yeah; to a degree, it's eutrophication in the ponds. [overgrowth of plant life, consuming excess oxygen] Too many nutrients, water quality isn't as good as it once was; we kind of considered scallops as the canary in the coal mine.

Very much so. If it's really ideal conditions, the scallops are fat, dumb and happy. And sometimes they're not. So anyway, Dave Borden, who's a coworker, had family over in Westport, Massachusetts. And they had a program. The Westport River has two branches, and it goes from a very fresh area to a very salty area. Well, the native scallop population in Westport, Massachusetts was so phenomenal --the animals had spawned way up river. And when you had the spring thaw, and spring run-off, it would decrease the salinity so it would kill the scallops. So they had a program that, as a commercial scalloper, part of their license requirement was [that]

they had to participate in a transplant to move these scallops from the upper part of the river down to the higher salinity.

So David worked a deal for us to go over to Westport to work with them transplanting the scallops downriver. And for every bushel we brought down river, we got for Rhode Island! So we would go over – God, I'd leave at 5:00 in the morning and drive over to Westport, fill up the skiff. And I'd have Tom Saunders, I'd have John Crandall and all the local guys standin' by; and when we came back from the end of the day of scalloping, then we had the guys and the boats. And we took 'em out to the ponds, and we planted them in the ponds.

And that led to the period of time, in the late '70's, [when] we had these phenomenal scallop projects. But that was a good as us being able to bring scallops into the areas. And in 1985, we had what is called a Brown Tide, which literally wiped out the bay scallops throughout southern New England and Long Island. And it's never recovered. So since that time, the scallop projects that we've done in the pond have been from hatcheries. And they haven't been – they're just not hardy enough. They're not doing very well. But the scallop projects led to getting involved in shellfish, and in the ponds. And I've always had this close relationship with the ponds. So I figured if I could manage the fisheries in the ponds, you know, we could learn lessons and apply them to the bay. So that's pretty much how I got involved in that. And we did, over the '70's (I always call that kind of like the heyday of the ponds), I had a lot of – uh, we had a recession; and there was a federal program set up, called the Young Adult Conservation Corps. And they were employing unemployed 18- to 21-year -olds. Well, I was an adjunct professor at URI, so I had the cream of the crop of URI grads. So do you remember Kim Gogggin? – Do you remember the Gogggins that lived down here? She was one of them. Martha Gray, Bob Gray's daughter? These kids all worked for me and did shellfish service in the pond! And those shellfish service[s] that we did in the ponds are really—the first studies that were done. And pretty much the premier studies that we did. So that's kind of what connected my whole salt-pond thing together.

DOYLE: Hmm. OK.

GANZ: And that has grown, you know, and I really got more involved in shellfisheries -- quahogs and aquaculture – oysters—of course we had oyster resources in Ninigret Pond here; there were only –oysters—

DOYLE: There aren't –they were natural?

GANZ: Yeah; Ninigret actually, in my lifetime – Pawcatuck River, Narrow River, Ninigret Pond, and Green Hill Pond had substantial oyster resources. Narrow River and Pawcatuck River were closed to pollution. So that left these ponds. And then, you know, in the early '80's, Green Hill was closed to pollution. But independent of that, and I think largely because of global

warming, our oyster diseases, that were always southern diseases, have moved up north. So we have MSX and we have Dermal Disease in oysters here, which pretty much wiped out our resource.

DOYLE: So in other words, you can't grow oysters in the ponds.

GANZ: What we're doing right now, in the Salt Ponds Coalition is –actually the aquaculturist – I was an adjunct professor at URI, and I taught aquaculture as well--

DOYLE: Yes –

GANZ: They have now, 2005 and 2006, created a hybrid oyster, which is called a Green Hill Hybrid. And they have hybridized Green Hill oysters with a disease-free strain from the Chesapeake. So we are now trying, as we speak, trying to re-introduce these disease-free oysters into our system.

DOYLE: But not into the polluted Green Hill Pond.

GANZ: No; no. You can't do that; it's illegal. We have an area in Quonnie [Pond] and an area in Ninigret [Pond] that were planted last fall. We'll see how that works.

DOYLE: Oh wonderful!

GANZ: I've really digressed from the historical –

DOYLE: No, no; this IS historical!

GANZ: This is how I got involved with the ponds.

DOYLE: This is natural history; I mean it is—it's all very—

GANZ: So anyway, I guess, getting back to the Quonnie side of things: I was working as a marine biologist, and I guess I was in my senior year, last year of graduate school. And I met Pam Graham. And Pam Graham was a senior in college and I was finishing up graduate school. There's five years' age difference between us. And we started dating. And I told her about this –you know, let's take a ride down to my favorite spot: Quonochontaug. Well, come to find out – to make a long story short – the Graham family – her dad was an army colonel and had lived all over the world –

DOYLE: So she lived all over the world!

GANZ: Yeah --and [he] died of cancer, and when he died, they were renting the Glover cottage and they were there. So here is two people who came together – we met actually at the Greenwood Presbyterian Church and we dated –

DOYLE: So she didn't go to URI –Pam—

GANZ: She did go to URI one year; she flunked out. She went to CCRI. But once we got into this whole relationship, her grandmother MacIntyre—Grace MacIntyre --lived on Elm Street in Westerly. Grandma Graham, the Graham family, lived in Bradford. And whenever their family was in whatever part of the world, they would rent a house in Quonochontaug. I never knew her; she never knew me. But the Grahams rented Helen Duksta's house. Helen Duksta and my mother-in-law, Mary Graham, were friendly. And I don't know exactly what the relationship was there, but they were old Westerly friends. So the Grahams rented the Dukstas' Quonnie cottage; they rented the house that is now owned by Tracey Maron at the corner of Highland --where Highland makes the bend—

DOYLE: The farmhouse—

GANZ: No; next door to the farmhouse; the little cottage

DOYLE: Yes; the little one.

GANZ: And when the colonel --he was -- they were actually in Germany when they diagnosed the cancer. And he went from there to Walter Reed [Hospital]. And then they moved the family back. And there wasn't anything much that they could do for him at Walter Reed, so since the family was more or less Rhode Island roots, they came back and he went to the Naval hospital at Quonset, where he died. So my mother-in-law and the three daughters were in the Glover Cottage the summer of 1967 when he died. So when Pam and I were dating, she was as familiar with Quonochonaug as I was!

DOYLE: [Laughing quietly] That's strange!

GANZ: So from there -- well, we married two years later, and we built this house. You know my grandmother deeded us off an acre, and we built this house. And it was a little tiny ranch house the first year we were married. It was actually a modular ranch house.

DOYLE: Did you help in the building of your house?

GANZ: No; nope. I'm about as clever as nothing. But we built the house; little tiny house. Wasn't making much money. What we could afford: It was a threebedroom ranch. Came in on two -- you know it was modular -- came in on two yellow halves. In fact, it was funny, because the foundation was in and people in Quonochontaug went to work that day. And by the time they came back from work, there was a house! So we moved into that April first of 1975, through all sorts of mud. And in 1988, we cut the top off it and made it a colonial. And that was an interesting story too, because Jean Pelham (you know Mike)—

DOYLE: Sure!

GANZ: Yeah; well Jean Pelham worked for the building inspector 's office in those days. And Pam decided what she wanted to do: she wanted to make this a colonial house. And Jean Pelham knew all the specifications for construction. So those two ladies sat at the dining room table and drank Lord knows how many pots of tea and designed the whole upstairs, the whole reconstruction of this house on graph paper, all to scale. Brought it up to the building inspector. And you know, we had to get a new septic system, which was – the septic system here is huge.

But we built the four-bedroom colonial house out of this. This room was originally the living room , with a picture window right there. The front door was approximately here. Where the hallway is, was Graham's small bedroom. Where the living room is was our master bedroom. Martha's room stayed the same; that is a study, the single bath that was there, and then the cellar stairs went down the middle, this way. They were moved to the center of the house, expanding the kitchen. And there was a formal dining room. And then upstairs there are four bedrooms and two baths. So the picture window that was here went up to our master bedroom because in 1988 we had a very nice ocean view. But now the trees are grown up. Anyway, so that was 1988 we did that.

Of course we raised two children, both of them were water rats. We were up to six boats at one point in time, you know, little boats. On the pond.

DOYLE: On the pond? Ninigret pond?

GANZ: Oh yeah; we've been fortunate. That Jack and Joan Crawford, across the street: they bought one of the parcels of the Osterhus property. And they've been more than generous as far as letting us keep our little boats in the yard and so forth. And I have the best dockage arrangement in the world. I take care of their two Labrador retrievers when they go away, and I have a mooring in front of their house. It's a great deal!

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DOYLE: It's a barter situation.

GANZ: Absolutely, absolutely! But Graham, like I, - we gave him a little twelvefoot boat one Christmas – he was –I don't know—ten, eleven, twelve— something like that. So he went out on the pond, the same as I did. And Martha was – she was my sailor; she –we had a little Sunfish, and she sailed that for a little while.

DOYLE: So the impact of Quonnie on your children was –

GANZ: Well, they were born and raised here. Martha was – the house was under construction when Martha was born. In fact this great huge tree right out in front we call Martha's tree. Because that was a root-ball Christmas tree in our apartment the first Christmas we were married. And we were all set to go out to Newport on New Year's Eve when Pam says, "Something's going to happen!" And sure enough, January first, Martha was born! And I took

that tree, from our apartment in East Greenwich, and towed it under, in the field, until the house was built. And after the house was built, we planted that little tree, which didn't stand any bigger than this. I think the first Christmas, we put lights around it, it was one string of lights. So Martha was born, and we moved here as soon as the house was done. And Graham was born two days after the Blizzard of '78. So we had to get permission to drive up to Kent County Hospital to have the baby – two days after the blizzard!

DOYLE: Did somebody follow you all the way up or --?

GANZ: Oh no! I'd been to four years of college in Maine, I'd been to prep school; I was a seasoned driver. But it was funny because I called the police in Charlestown because there was supposed to be a driving ban, And they said, "Oh Art, just go ahead; but call the State Police in Hope Valley anyway." So I called the police in Hope Valley. They said, "Oh, Mr. Ganz, we can't authorize you to be on the road." I said, "Goodbye." So we drove up, dropped Martha at my parents' house in Warwick and went to Kent County Hospital and --! So those kids were basically born and raised here.

And Martha of course is a biologist and now Chair of the Science Department at Chariho High School, so she followed that gene. And Graham builds boats; he is a master boat builder and a licensed hundredtime boat captain. So once again the salt ponds had an awful lot to do with the raising of these kids.

And now Martha's given us two little granddaughters who spend an inordinate amount of time with Poppa, on the pond or at the beach. And as recently as last —a week before Thanksgiving, Thursday, little Emma, who's her mother's clone, said to her mother, driving along, that "Litter on the street is really not good for the world." Which somehow this little kid's mind decided that: could she go to "Boppa's" house and clean the beach. And that day she took a bag and her garden gloves, and it was blowin' – Ann, it was blowin' out of the east 25 knots. And here's this tyke with her bag. And she wouldn't go home until she filled that litterbag full of-- You know, she just went around the parking lot, along the beach—wanted to clean Boppa's beach.

DOYLE: Oh gosh!

GANZ: So you know, it's comin' around.

DOYLE: Yes it is. Oh, a lot to be joyful for. Yeah; yeah.

GANZ: So I don't know – here we are. Fat, dumb and happy; I retired. Well, you know I was an adjunct professor at URI, teaching shellfish aquaculture; did that for 28 years. And worked in fisheries, coastal zone management, and so forth for 35 years. And I was retired for exactly one month before they made me President of the Salt Ponds Coalition, so I'm continuing to do that.

DOYLE: Can you just do a little piece on the Salt Ponds Coalition?

GANZ: Well, the Salt Ponds Coalition—back in 1979—’78-’79, my staff and a group at URI—Virginia Lee and Sea-Grant people joined forces to look at every aspect of the coastal ponds that we could look at. I headed up the fisheries and shellfish section; Dr. John Boothroyd, who’s retiring this year, headed up the geology section; Marilyn Harlan was the botanist that headed up that section; and we did a huge project, a five-year project, learning everything we could learn about the salt ponds. And that ultimately led to the Special Area Management Plan adopted by the Coastal Resources Management Council, which is the master plan for --you know— consideration in the ponds.

Well, one of the things that was sorely needed, and is still sorely needed, is more monitoring – more local monitoring. And one of the outputs of that study was the creation of a volunteer monitoring group, which we now know as the Pond Watchers, which this year will be the 25th year that these folks have gone out and measured water quality.

As an offshoot from the Pond Watchers, there were also springing up many small local conservation advocacy groups around the salt ponds. There was the thing down at Winnapaug Pond called Save our Shores, there was the Quonochontaug Beach Conservation (QBCC) over there, there was the Charlestown Concerned Citizens over here; and they all got together and formed this coalition that we now know as the Salt Ponds Coalition.

And so now we have four combined forces, and we work together. And we have grown over the years, all pretty much based on our water quality testing. And that is done by about 32 volunteers; every other Wednesday they go out and test. And about five years ago now – originally one of the big concerns we had, and we still have, probably the major concern, is nutrient enrichment in the ponds. There’s too much fertilizer—in the form of phosphates, nitrates, ammonia and so forth going into the salt ponds—which is aging the ponds terribly. Originally, when the Sea Grant program was funding the Pond Watchers, we did nutrient testing. But when the funding ran out for that, and we could no longer afford to do it, because it was \$600 a test, we did not test nutrients.

And then Dr. Ted Callender, who’s a retired hydrologist, joined our board and took over this program, since we have absolutely got to be testing nutrients. Nothing else – you know, you’re not going to get the whole story. So he went out and pretty much personally drummed up money to fund the expanded testing which we’re doing now.

DOYLE: Is that going to be ongoing for a couple of years?

GANZ: It’s going to be ongoing for as far as we can do it. But every year, money to non-profits gets harder and harder to get. We usually get a combination

of grant money and local money. What we're trying to do, pretty much, is get like the East Beach Association, Weekapaug Fire District, Shelter Harbor Fire District, Shady Harbor Fire District to pay for one or more stations. And they've been good that way.

DOYLE: Has Central Beach been receptive?

GANZ: Can't afford it. Is what I was told. And so we get chunks of money from there. We're very generously sponsored by Quonnie, Weekapaug, Shelter Harbor, Shady Harbor; we are trying desperately as even when you were on the board, trying to get more people from Narragansett/South Kingstown. So we're still working on that. We've made great inroads in Green Hill. So we're growing; we have now partnered, on the shellfish restoration project, which is winding down now –this huge shellfish stocking project that we did in the partnership with the Nature Conservancy and Save the Bay and the Salt Ponds Coalition. And that was major: I mean, that was more of a project, more of a boost to the salt ponds than I ever saw when I was working. And we put in, I want to say, pretty much close to a thousand bushels of quahogs into two spawner sanctuaries in the salt ponds one in Quonnie [Pond], one in Ninigret, over the past two years, using all volunteer help.

DOYLE: And what are your hopes for –

GANZ: Well, what I did in 1978, when I did those first Stouffer ? surveys, was, I established in the salt ponds what I call spawner sanctuaries. And I closed – had the Marine Fisheries Council close certain areas of the pond to harvesting shellfish.

DOYLE: Were you responsible for that?

GANZ: Oh yeah.

DOYLE: I didn't know that!

GANZ: Oh yes. So those areas are closed. And from that time, we stocked shellfish, adults, all in close proximity, so when they spawn, there's closeness there, so there's fertilization. And then of course the shellfish larvae moves; it goes through its embryotic stages for 14 to 21 days. So where the wind and the tide takes it, then it sets. So if you look at each one of our spawner sanctuaries, they're pretty much in the southwest corner of each pond, because that predominant wind and current is going to spread that larvae. Now when I did the first spawner sanctuary in Quonochontaug Pond, in 1978, we had something like point 78 [0.78] animals per square meter. I went back in 1981, and we had in excess of 2 animals per square meter, pond-wide. So we know it works.

DOYLE: Yeah.

GANZ: And so that continued in Quonnie. The one in Winnapaug unfortunately has not worked. The environmental condition in Winnapaug is beyond sad.

Now why that pond is not closed to pollution I'll never know. But I think that the Town of Westerly gave it its death blow last year.

DOYLE: Is there hope for it to turn around?

GANZ: Well, they've got to make some major decisions, because what Westerly did is—you know where the Misquamicut Beach is? That Misquamicut neighborhood?

DOYLE: Oh yeah.

GANZ: That floods in a heavy rain. So what they've decided to do is put a series of pumps, a pumping station, and pump it into the pond. So those big deep puddles, where people's yards are flooded and everything--with septic and cesspool stuff and everything else— [he whistles]—right into Winnapaug Pond.

DOYLE: Now how—they allowed that to happen?

GANZ: That went through with all the permits. Salt Ponds Coalition didn't know about it till it was –

DOYLE: How could that be accepted?

GANZ: Everybody xxxx--everybody said, "Oh, no problem; no problem."

DOYLE: Up – ah—you know.

GANZ: Yeah; yeah. Well, it's locally. But anyway, that's a serious problem, so the spawner sanctuary in Winnapaug has not really worked out. But the one in Quonnie [Pond] worked out very well. We expanded one into here, in Ninigret; and that's working very well. So that—

DOYLE: Now do people adhere to the "No shellfishing in the sanctuary"?

GANZ: Well that is a difficult thing. However, I don't know if you read the article in the Salt Ponds newsletter-- but we planted all that shellfish. And some guys came in at night. Of course it's a felony if you're digging polluted shellfish at night. Well, they set up on them; they caught the guys harvesting out of the Quonnie spawner sanctuary. And of course, when that happens, they confiscate boats—everything—you know, the whole bit.

DOYLE: Yeah.

GANZ: They confiscated a camera. The camera had pictures-- with those little dates in the corner—of them doing it two nights before! So these guys got busted bad!

DOYLE: [After gasping] Are they representatives of a company of some kind or just individuals?

GANZ: No; these were just quahog pirates, just quahog pirates out for a fast buck. But they got caught. So yes, there is a certain amount of problem—

DOYLE: Because I don't think a lot of people know about the sanctuaries, enough to stay out of them.

GANZ: I don't know why. I've made them, and I know Dennis Erkan has continued to do these: these four-foot-square signs: red on one side that says "Closed to Shell Fishing," white on one side. The one over here I've never seen a problem with. And that goes across the pond. That's like a stripe right across Ninigret Pond. And that's not a problem. And of course there were some shellfish planted prior to that configuration, that the people are harvesting right now. And they can see -- they're right on the line. 'Cause I watch 'em! And no; it's worked out well.

DOYLE: Oh good!

GANZ: So there's always a certain amount of piracy, but –

DOYLE: Now what is your hope for the next decade or two? Or even further, for what you've been involved in, in terms of the health of the ponds.

GANZ: Well, I think if – if – we've got to do something, 'cause we're losing the ponds at a faster and faster and faster rate. One of the things that we are again [trying] – and we have never ceased-- to try to get the breachways dredged. Because the breachways are filling in with sand and they are plugging up – not only are they covering up valuable eel grass beds but they are plugging up the ponds so the ponds cannot flush. The development around the ponds has too much fertilizer in the form of phosphates, nitrates, run-off—all this kind of stuff. So one thing that can be done for all the ponds is to fix those breachways – and the key—to maintain them.

DOYLE: That's the key.

GANZ: And then that's going to be a big thing. And we have also somehow got to do a better job of educating the public about use of chemicals – lawn chemicals, things like that.

The State has come through with wide-sweeping septic regulations, which is controversial as heck in this town for a whole lot of reasons, [not] the least of which is expense: people don't have it, and that's understandable. So right now, as of this date, I am working with--: as a member of the Salt Ponds Coalition --our group, what I call our partners-- the Nature Conservancy, Save the Bay, Salt Ponds Coalition are working with the Town of Charlestown and the Town Administrator, Richie Hosp is spearheading this, Peter Ogle from the Wastewater Management, and we are meeting with DEM. [Department of Environmental Management]

And DEM is basically saying to the Town: “If you can do—“ See the septic issue is one of many problems, and the DEM has basically said to the Town, “If you can address some of these other issues, we’re going to work closer with you for a meaningful way to implement better septic—“

DOYLE: Relations?

GANZ: Yes; so we are now working on better drainage, for the roads. We went to East Lyme, Connecticut the other day, to a demonstration project the University of Connecticut’s doing to look at better ways of containing the run-off on the impermeable surfaces. They are working – we’ve asked the Conservation Commission to develop a fertilizer ordinance for lawn fertilizers—We did find out—I did find out--

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DOYLE: Do you think that that is realistic? You know, how would that be enforced?

GANZ: They’re going to have to get an approval, a permit to do it.’

DOYLE: Who’s that? I mean—

GANZ: As it stands now, all of the professional appliers of pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers all have to be licensed by DEM. So that is -- they have a license holding over their head. Individual people are not regulated per se. But with this ordinance, that’s going to be something. I mean it’s brand new. We’re going to have to see how it goes. Whether they’ll have to get a town application –

DOYLE: This is just for Charlestown?

GANZ: This is for Charlestown now, because we haven’t gotten really good support from Westerly and South Kingstown, to join. You know the Horsely-Witten study? We did a heck of a lot of work on that with Vic Dvorak, and we got that project done. And immediately, South Kingstown took a look at it; and they wanted a second opinion. So they spent even more money on another whole study, which is still controversial. So they’re stalling in there. And Westerly had the audacity to mainstream all this storm water into the pond. So Charlestown is going to do it for Charlestown and hopefully be a model for other things –

DOYLE: Yeah; but ultimately it’s going to be regulating the whole fertilizer industry.

GANZ: Oh yeah!

DOYLE: I mean that’s where it’s headed. But it won’t be for a long time.

GANZ: Oh, sure. But anyway, that’s – I guess my hope now is to try to do that. And, you know, to support education.

DOYLE: And that’s constant, isn’t it.

GANZ: It's constant but, the most frustrating part is, you can educate the people who want to be educated. And the people that don't want to be educated don't. And all you need to do is have one, you know, that spoils it for all the good works.

DOYLE: You know, I think, Art, that people are just so inundated with so many things to contend with in their own lives that it's hard for them to take in—

GANZ: What do they have when they don't have an environment?

DOYLE: I know; I agree with you!

GANZ: What do they have when their water is so foul they can't drink it? But you're absolutely right. I will tell you a true story. My dear friend Leo Mainelli--30 years ago, the Quonochontaug East Beach Association water system was a seasonal system, built in the '40's when metals were hard to come by. Much of the piping in the seasonal system—and I'm sure it was this way in Central Beach as well—was metal-bestos pipe. Leo tried to get a consensus of the water company people: Do we want to go to a year-round system to replace what we have, or replace—you know, the seasonal system? But it needed to be replaced because of the asbestos.

DOYLE: MmmHmm.

GANZ: He sent the questionnaire out to 100 users; got 6 back. They didn't care what they were drinking! How serious is that?

DOYLE: Yeah.

GANZ: So your point! Absolutely your point.

DOYLE: Yeah. [Pause] Well, can you think of anything else that –

GANZ: I know I promised that – but –

DOYLE: No; no no; I think it's excellent Art. You've really done a great job.

GANZ: So that takes us from start to finish.

DOYLE: So in terms of how Quonnie has impacted your life –I think we've learned that.

GANZ: Quonnie is my life.

DOYLE: Yes; yes. Quonnie IS your life. That is a good –I like that.

GANZ: Everything that I do – everything that I want to do I can do within five

minutes of my house. Which is why I've become such a – somewhat of a hermit. But I'm out there with that bike every day, tootin' around. I enjoy the four seasons, you know, walk the beach almost every day.

DOYLE: You know, I think that what you're doing is – you know you can make a difference in the world by making a difference in your community.

GANZ: Yeah. That's sort of –sort of looking at my whole career side of things. You know, you think, as a 28-year-old marine biologist you're going to save the world. And then you kind of get down to "If I can do a little bit of this in the salt pond,"—

DOYLE: Yeah –

GANZ: "I can do a little bit of this in Quonochontaug," And you look at how it's gone from "this" to planting snow fence and dune grass down at the end of the street – that's what it boils down to! So –

DOYLE: Well, thank you so much.

GANZ: OK You still awake?

DOYLE: Am I still awake!

END OF CONVERSATION